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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

July 23, 1955.

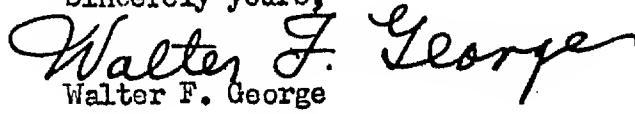
Honorable Allen W. Dulles
 Director of Central Intelligence
 Central Intelligence Agency
 Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. Dulles :

Enclosed is a copy of S. 2614, introduced July 22, 1955 by Senator Smith of New Jersey, "To establish a Joint Committee on Foreign Intelligence."

It will be appreciated if the Committee on Foreign Relations may have the views of your Agency on this measure.

Sincerely yours,



Walter F. George

Chairman.

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In addition, Senator Russell, Chairman of the Armed Services Committee, has designated a small group of the senior members of his committee to meet with CIA representatives from time to time to consider those phases of our work of interest to his committee. Insofar as CIA is concerned, we have felt that through the work of the committees above mentioned, we have had ample opportunity to secure full consideration of any legislative and related problems affecting the Agency and we have not felt the need ~~for~~ ^{any} for the establishing of any committees to replace or supplement ~~them~~, ~~the congressional committees with which we already have contact.~~ ^{As you appreciate,} it is important from the point of view of security to restrict, to the extent feasible, the number of persons who are knowledgeable of the sensitive operations of this Agency. The requests ^{relations} ~~had with~~ ^{me} which we have so-far received from the committees of Congress have been entirely consistent with this security need.

In case the Congress should feel that a ~~further~~ Committee ^{should be established} ~~of course, we turn~~ to deal with the CIA ~~was required, we would not be disposed to oppose~~ ^{by} ~~fuller cooperation~~ ^{it} but I would point out that as the Central Intelligence Agency under the National Security Act of 1947 (Public Law 253, 80th Congress) is "established under the National Security Council," the views of

the latter on this subject would be controlling on us.

I would point out that the recommendation of the Hoover
Commission and the scope of S. 2614 is broader than the Central
Intelligence Agency alone and relates to all aspects of the foreign
intelligence activities of the Government.

Sincerely,

Allen W. Dulles
Director

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Remarks:		
<i>Believe this makes the point without being in direct opposition.</i>		
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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

The Honorable Walter F. George
 Chairman, Committee on Foreign Relations
 United States Senate
 Washington 25, D. C.

Dear Senator George:

This is in reply to your letter of 23 July 1955 requesting comments on S. 2614, introduced 22 July 1955 by Senator Smith of New Jersey, "To establish a Joint Committee on Foreign Intelligence".

We have consistently taken the position that it is a matter of Congressional prerogative to determine whether there should be a special committee to watch over the activities of the Central Intelligence Agency and related organizations. However, there are certain matters peculiar to intelligence operations which should be given due consideration before the Congress establishes a Joint Committee.

In the first place, the security aspects of intelligence operations are of paramount importance. All intelligence organizations throughout the world are constantly on the lookout for information concerning their rivals. Even the smallest piece of information, no matter how trivial, may provide valuable leads. This would include the number of employees of an organization, the size of the budget, the number of automobiles it utilizes, the areas in which it has representatives, and any indication of how much it knows. While it is naturally assumed that all members of the Congress will be appropriately discreet, it should be noted that such a committee would have staff members who would have to be very thoroughly screened.

The problems relating to a staff of a Joint Committee on Intelligence are not inconsequential. It should be noted that the staff would undoubtedly spend considerable time in the intelligence organizations and consequently would gain a broad knowledge of the most sensitive type of work. This would raise a very fundamental question as to how complete their knowledge should be, and I might point out that there are certain operations known only to two or three individuals in this organization.

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Undoubtedly your committee will wish to consider the effect that the establishment of a Joint Committee on Intelligence would have on the relationship between the legislative and executive branches of government. Throughout history intelligence has been used to keep the policy makers informed concerning the capabilities and intentions of other nations. Properly speaking, intelligence should be gathered before policy is made. As you can readily see, this raises a rather complex matter of intra-governmental relations.

I should also like to point out the relations of the Central Intelligence Agency to other committees of the Congress. As you are aware, Senator Russell, Chairman of the Armed Services Committee, has established a subcommittee to deal with the CIA composed of himself and Senators Johnson (Texas), Byrd, Bridges and Saltonstall. The Appropriations Committees in both Houses hold hearings on the CIA budget each year and go into considerable detail in regard to our activities. We also come under the jurisdiction of the Committees on Government Operations, and have always endeavored to answer any questions raised by these bodies. The important aspect of this is whether these committees would yield their jurisdiction to a Joint Committee on Intelligence.

This leads to the last point which I would like to mention and that is the number of individuals who would become knowledgeable of our highly sensitive operations. Senator Smith's bill, which is similar to other bills introduced during the recent session, would establish a committee composed of nine members from each House. Should this number be added to the number from Appropriations, Armed Services, and Government Operations, it would appear to create a very large group who were aware of secret activities.

We would be happy to discuss this matter further with you, or to provide you with any additional details which you might desire.

Sincerely,

Allen W. Dulles
Director